

RainTube gutters keep leaves out, are 'green'

CHRIS HAGAN Statesman Journal
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Wildwood Inc. President John Miller loves trees.

His company's Woodscape Glen development was planned around the trees on the site when it was constructed 25 years ago. But as much as he loves trees, he hates leaves.

"We've been saving native oaks for 30 years," Miller said. "But there's a real price to pay when you save trees in the form of leaf management."

But Woodscape will be getting a new rain gutter system that will drastically cut down leaf cleaning costs and, best of all for a sustainable development, is completely recyclable.

Miller found a company in Jacksonville, Ore., called RainTube. The company manufactures plastic inserts that keep leaves out of gutters and are made mostly of old milk jugs.

The product won four awards at the U.S. Green Building Council's Build Green Exposition last year. The system also helps buildings qualify for LEED certification credits.

"It's really exciting," Miller said. "It sounds so mundane but it's really exciting to find something like this."

Installation requires running the tubes through a machine that crushes them down, giving workers around a half-hour to fit it in the gutters before it re-expands. The process allows the tubes to completely fill the gutter without loose spaces for leaves to get stuck.

But even when Miller found the company, the product was so unknown in the Willamette Valley that there were no local companies to install it.

So he called ABC Windows, a company that shares Miller's green ideals, and asked for help. Todd Londin, ABC owner, agreed to get a crew certified through two days of what his workers called "intense" training.

"We've never done anything like this before," said Mike Farrar, ABC pressure washing manager. "Normally we just do windows and pressure washing."

Londin expects the system to last quite a while despite being made of recycled milk jugs.

"It'll last 100 years or until the gutters fall off," Londin said. "We won't be here."

The full installation will put in nearly two miles of RainTube on about 65 homes. The project will cost Wildwood \$40,000-\$50,000.



THOMAS PATTERSON | STATESMAN JOURNAL
Robert Garza Jr. and workers from ABC Windows install RainTube gutters.

RainTube

What: Green-designed system to keep leaves out of rain gutters.

Made of: 100 percent post-recyclable plastic

Amount used at Woodscape Glen: 2 miles

cost including installation: \$40,000-\$50,000

Information: www.raintube.com,
www.wildwoodco.com

But with the company spending about \$8,000 per year on gutter cleaning and maintenance, Miller feels the project is well worth it.

"It seems like a lot, but the payback will be in four to five years and it will last long after that, so it's a good investment," he said.